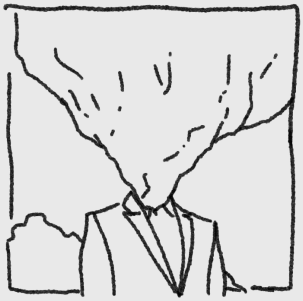
@LIMPZINE PRESENTS...

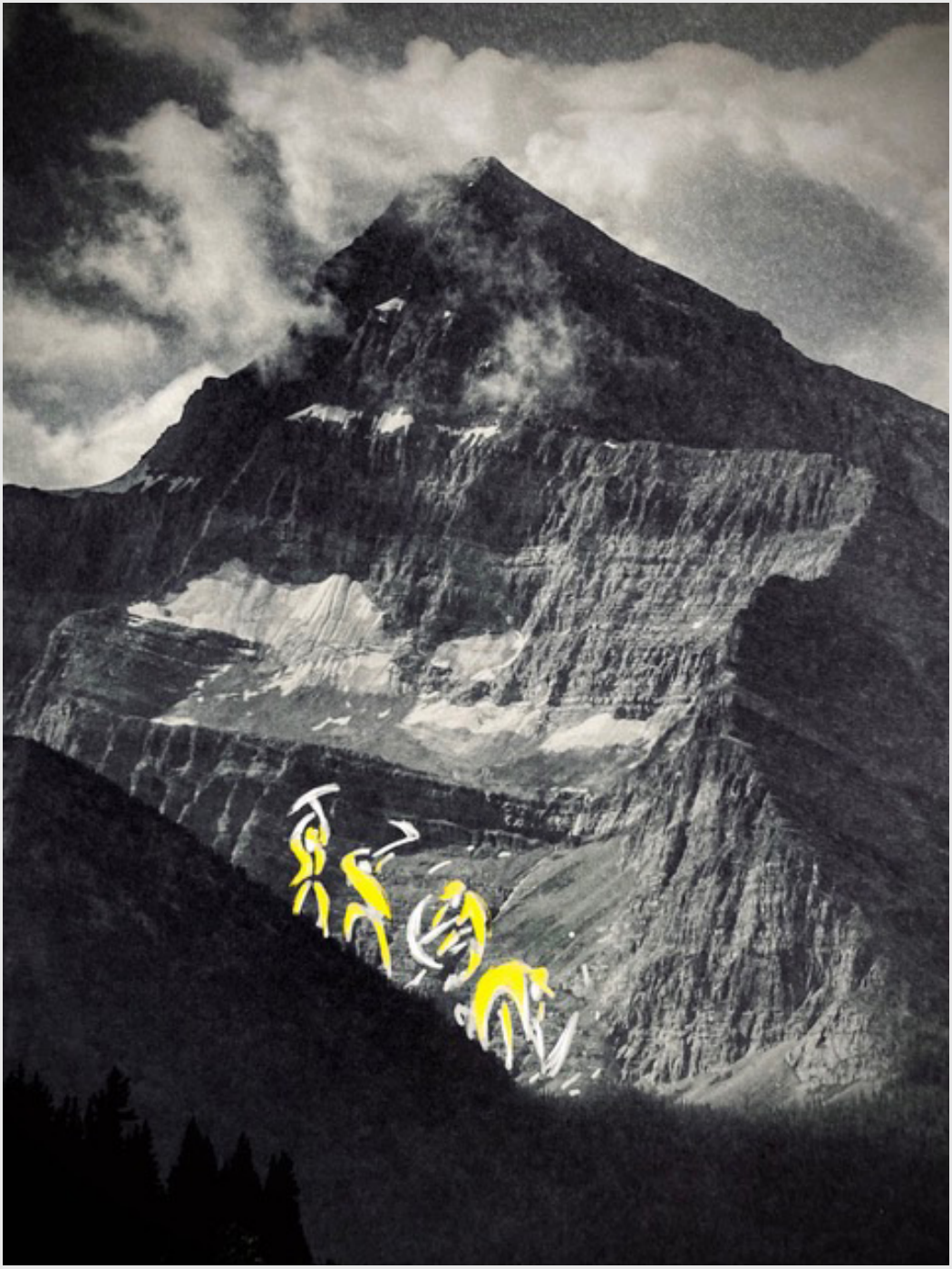
Everything Everything Mountainhead Fanzine



2024

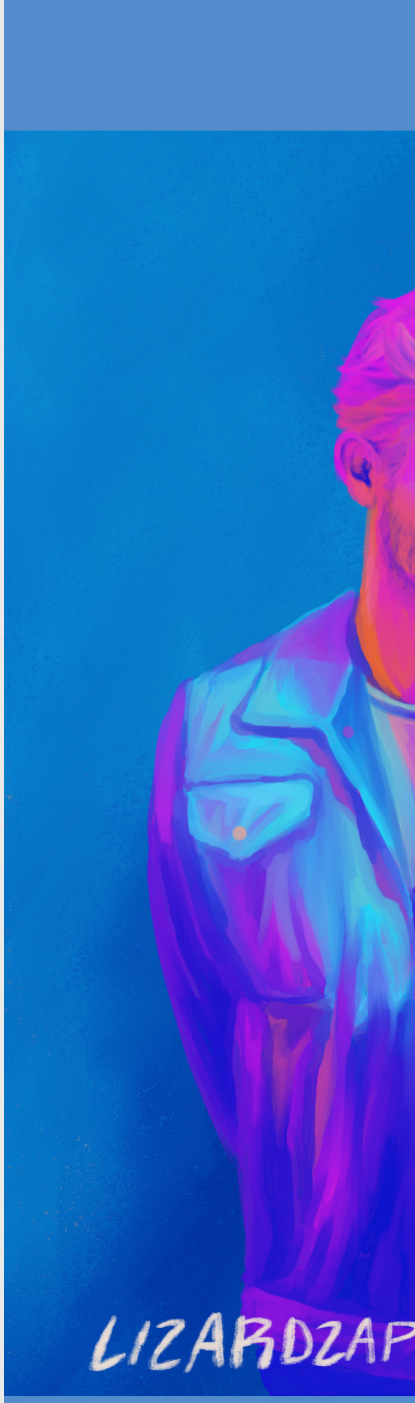
SO WE BUILT A MOUNTAIN

cube
mapsofnonexistentplaces.tumblr.com



Marsu/Marsuro
marsuro.tumblr.com
@marsuro3 instagram

Ryland
@lloneWanderer



@lizardzap
instagram / tumblr

Emily G
@pliablehead

Emily G
@pliablehead

The Mountainhead album cover is my sixth(!!) Everything Everything-themed stunt costume. I knew instantly I'd want to do it, but I wanted it to be more of a surprise than waiting for Halloween to roll around again, and it felt right to do alongside the promotion of the album release! The idea for the smoke grenades came on a TOTAL WHIM and I'm so glad it all worked out.

The outfit was relatively easy: I used pants, socks, and shoes I already owned, bought a shirt from the thrift store, and sourced a blazer from eBay. When the blazer arrived, the previous owner had left some things in the pocket: a single breath mint, and a number of his own business cards, for his position as the Director of U.S. Government Affairs & Policy at Kraft Foods!! A position I did not even know existed. lol.

The pants were blue, and I used black dye to create the gradient from the bright blue on the album art at the waist to a very very dark blue/black at the ankles. We also attempted to dye the blazer in this way, but despite our best efforts, the dye didn't take

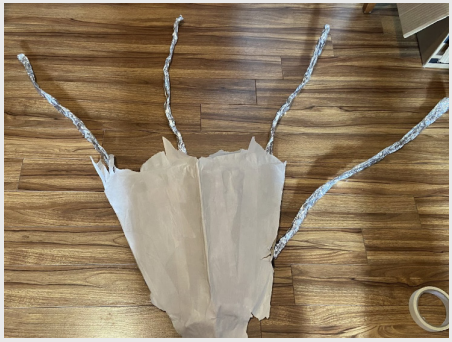
AT ALL; we turned to airbrushing with paint and ink, but even that didn't deposit a lot of color into the fabric, so in the end, I had to just use straight-up spraypaint. The end result was really crunchy and stiff to wear, but looked great in photos, which was the more important part.

But of course the trickiest part was the head!! I've done a lot of papier mache in my previous EE stuff and I knew that's how I wanted to go with this as well, since I wanted it to be as lightweight as possible to be worn on my literal head. I bought a roll of plain newsprint paper so the texture and color would be consistent for the whole thing. I started with building the shape I wanted for the base of the 'face' part out of craft foam, with masking tape for shape and structure.

There's a looser bit at the bottom so I could tuck it into the collar

of the shirt and also obscure my neck. I used an old T-shirt to make straps for the back of it to hold it in place around the back of my neck and the back and top of my head, sort of like the shape of a head strap for a GoPro. Once I had all of that assembled, I started my first layer of papier mache over just the face–I didn't realize that as it dried, it would REALLY curl up the foam at the edges! I ended up having to use a hair dryer to heat it up and kind of shape it back into place.

Then it was time to start building up for real. My cousin, who's a professional artist (and helped me with tailoring and airbrushing the blazer, as well as a lot of help for my Regret costume from 2019!), recommended making "bones" for the mountain out of tinfoil, since it's also very lightweight. I used four big tinfoil supports to kind of break the mountain up into three segments.



I wanted it to be about three "heads" tall when compared with my own head, and I tried to follow the shape of the mountainhead on the album art as best I could. This was the part where I hit a lot of trial and error in regard to my original ideas; I ended up having to heavily tape big stretches of dry, loose newsprint across the tinfoil supports kind of like a tent or a kite to give it a surface to build on with the actual papier mache. Once it had a full shape it was a lot easier. I did a lot of the work on my back porch in the earlier stages to try to reduce the mess, and I had a lot of things shoved up underneath it to help it keep its shape, since the soggy, paste-covered paper was a lot heavier and droopier than it would be once it dried.

What I liked a lot about the papier mache was that the natural texture of the scrunched-up, crusty paper lent itself really well to the cliff-face texture I was trying for with the final mountain! In the past I've done a lot of sanding on my papier mache projects to get

them smoothed out to a texture I liked, but for this I didn't have to do that at all. I just piled a bunch more layers on and let them do their own thing. Once I was getting down to what I thought would be the last couple layers, I started mixing grey paint into the papier mache mixture, so that it would be a mostly consistent base color when I started doing detail painting later. I had to move indoors because we had a cold and windy spell; Miriam did not know what to make of this.

Doing something like papier mache and paint also leaves a lot of "hurry up and wait" time between layers fully drying. In the meantime, there was a huge kerfuffle with my smoke grenades getting delivered, since

they were technically explosives, which meant I needed to sign for them. I ended up having to drive over half an hour out of town to a huge, scary FedEx facility to pick them up.

The last step on the mountainhead was detail painting! I used a sponge, and sometimes my own fingers, rather than a paintbrush, to try to keep that cobbled, stony texture. I was able to lean into a lot of the shapes that the papier mache had just fallen into on its own as it built up and dried, and it turned out basically exactly like I hoped! It was really satisfying to achieve!

I also decided, since you can't see any of the mountainheaded guy's skin at all on the cover, that I didn't want my bare hands to be exposed. I dug back out the gloves I made for the darker-colored hands on the Get To Heaven cover, from the first EE costume I did back in 2018–the dark blue was a pretty good match for what I needed! (I also really like the lore implications of that, that perhaps the mountainhead on the cover is the same person who was attacking that melting businessman some eight years ago...) I also knew I owned a gold-colored ring that looked like a snake, so you KNOW I had to get some Creddahornis swag in there. The night before the photoshoot, I tried on the entire costume from the neck down just to make sure it all gelled.

On the day-of, it went about as smoothly as I could have hoped! There was SNOW on the forecast, despite it being nearly March, but it miraculously cleared up before the very limited hour window I had in which my photographer friend and I were both available. The biggest bummer was that I obviously couldn't see anything with the mountainhead on, which meant that I couldn't even see how cool the smoke grenades looked as they were going off (though I took the head off to watch the test run we did beforehand). It was also fairly windy, which meant there were a lot of outtakes of me just hanging onto the mountainhead for dear life, since it was effectively just a big, stiff paper sail.

You can also see the silly girlboss shoes I was wearing–I chose them because I thought they really matched the green on the album cover, but they turned out a lot bluer in photos, and ultimately there weren't any head-to-toe shots I really liked anyway. The best ones were the ones where I was stepping out of the smoke!! I really owe SO MUCH to my photographer buddy for doing this for the low, low cost of buying him breakfast and then driving him to work after we were done.

All in all it was a really fun, fulfilling creative process, and I'd do it all again in a heartbeat! I'm SO happy with how it turned out and I'm glad that it was once again a hit with the lads and the fanbase. Looking forward to whatever my next one turns out to be :)

TWO MEN
ENTER THE MIRROR

@dreamdancer.file instagram
dreamdancerdotfiletumblr.com
I CAN
I CAN MAKE IT A BUSINESS
SELL YOU IT

Adam James
@adamjxphoto instagram
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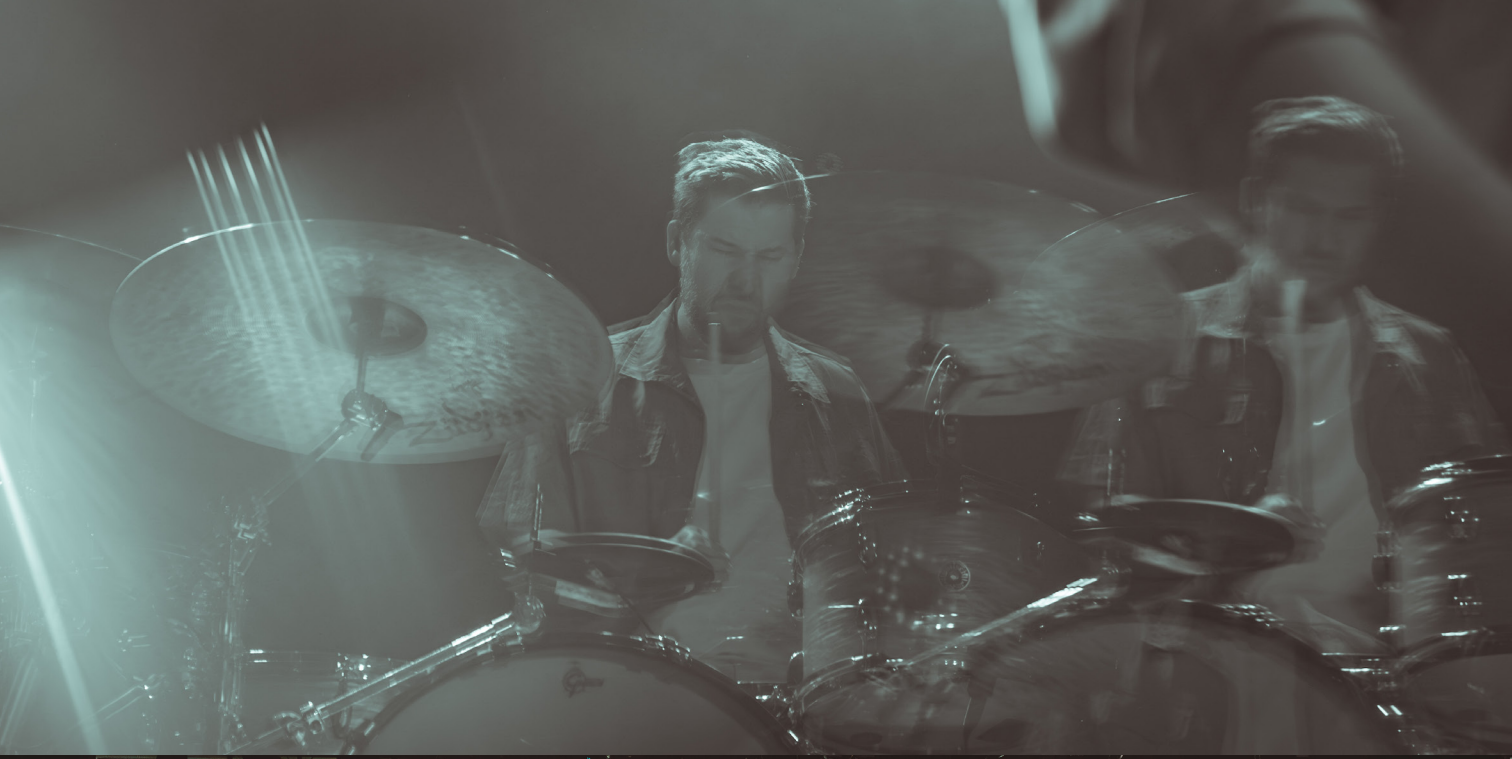

Last year, I attended my first Everything Everything concert and completed a creative writing class. The poetry assignment involved writing about a personal experience, focusing on a theme, and using descriptive imagery. This is the final draft of my very first poem.

A Moment of Worship at the Concert Venue
by Danielle B.

I, we, are puzzle pieces
with curves and edges
that click together.
I, we, are tapestry threads,
uniquely colored strands
that intertwine.

I, we, are parts
separated by land and sea.
We combine to create
a picture of passion,
a worldwide movement
that is our fanbase.

Tonight, we congregate
in a lively temple
to worship fellow beings
of flesh and bone.
While we gather, our waves
of cheering crash forth.

The main sanctuary room
has a chess board floor
and ink-colored curtains.
This evening's deities
are elevated on their pedestal,
an aquamarine and fuschia-lit stage.
Their divinity is marked
by stainless, snowy uniforms
and colorless hair.
Avoiding commoners' stares,
their eyes remain shut
or fixed beyond the crowd.

The god of falsetto
plants his right foot on a speaker,
holding the mic to his lips.
Reciting his holy verses,
he lifts his left hand,
a gesture to echoing worshippers.

Positioned front and center,
my eyes are cast upwards,
toward his backlit figure.
His presence pairs with the music,
which pumps into my ears
and blossoms inside my chest.

My enjoyment is enhanced
by my sacred attire,
a fox ears headband and blue earplugs.
I lick my lips
and move my fingers
as my well of joy overflows.

For the first time,
I am bumping arms and converging lives
with those who share my religion.
I am finally
a puzzle piece, a thread,
part of a complete, colorful image.

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adamjamesphotography.co.uk

Arie
@jst_asking
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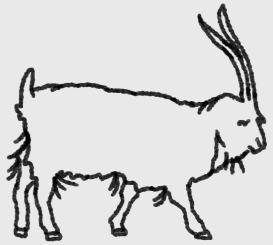
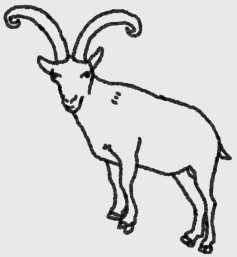
Ryland
@IloneWanderer

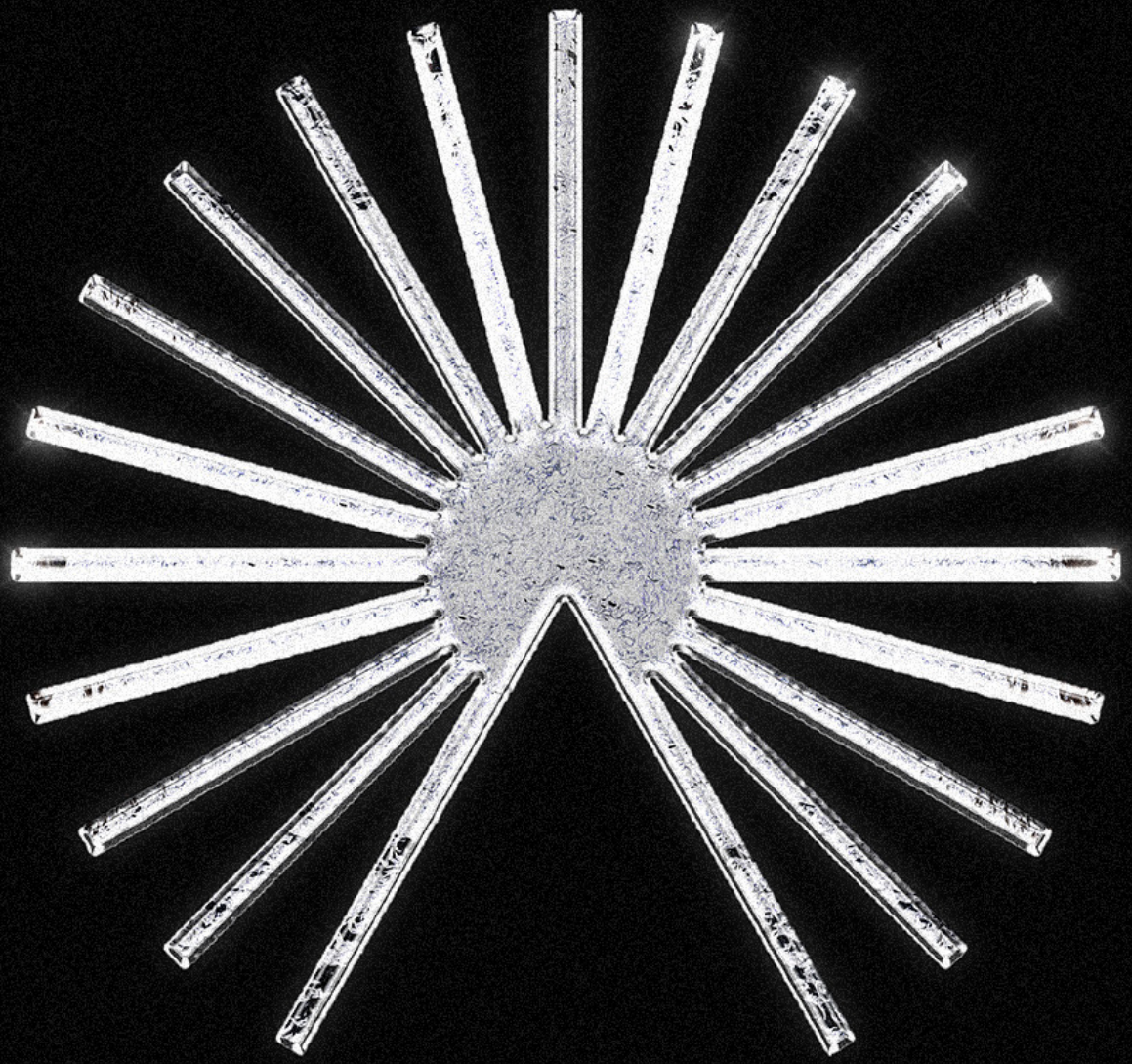
THOSE CREDDAHORNIS EYES





Charlie Kinkead

Con Daniels
@con.pcx instagram



Wallpaper versions for download
http://rb.gy/40hxr1

I made one in aged copper which is to allude to a less valuable currency perhaps used lower down the mountain hierarchy, then one in polished stainless steel and gilted with gold for those up the mountain who like shiny things.

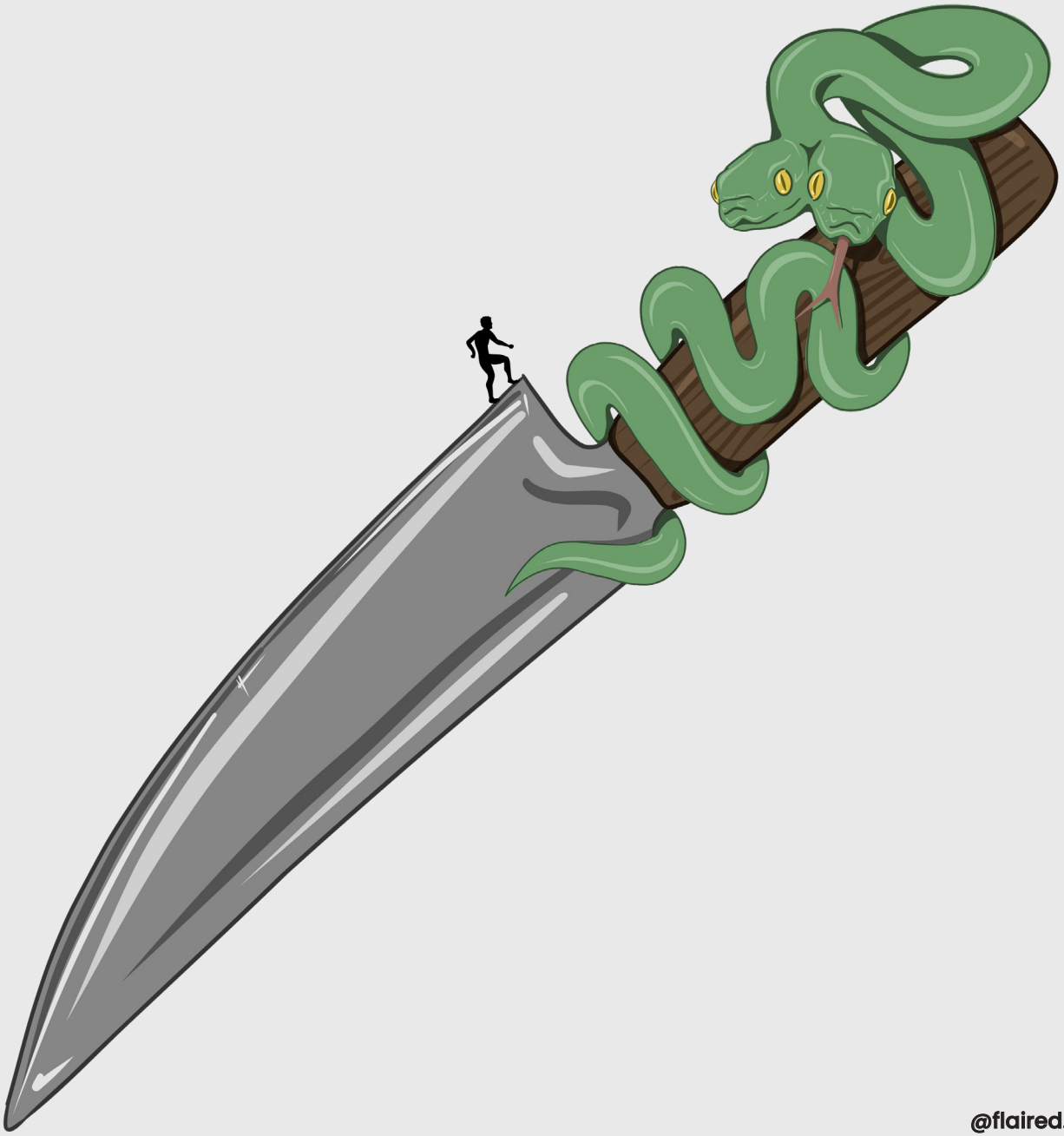
The mountain head logo is digitally distorted and represents a unique watermark perhaps used for an audit trail or to verify its authenticity.

On the picture side we have the highborn moth with an extra eye to represent surveillance, it is floating under the crown of the empire which has Creddahornis weaving through it which symbolises the power of the empire and the punishment which awaits those who disobey.

The crown has the Mountainhead logo behind a bar to serve as a reminder that the mountain is owned by the empire and to show everyone is prisoner to it.

The artist behind the picture side and descriptions of the symbols were produced by Anarco Crabtirinho of Brazil (u/anarco_cabritinho on reddit).

The production of the coins and the distortion of the mountain head logo were produced by Pete Wood though the original logo is the work of the Everything Everything.



@flaired._.genes
instagram

@MaskedCynic

‘I hear the drumming of the hellkite priest’ - Mountainhead and the cult of toxic masculinity

By Saskia Xena
@saskiaxena instagram

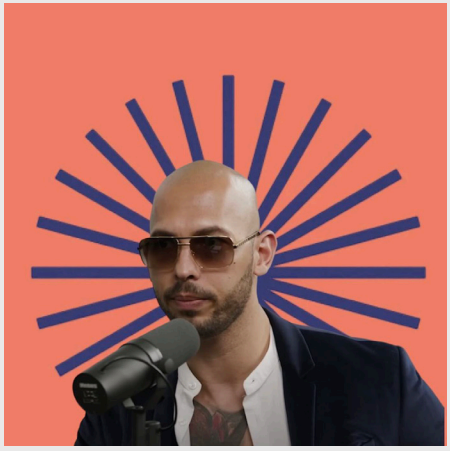
“I have everything every man has ever dreamed of. I got a big mansion, I got supercars, I can live anywhere I want, I got unlimited women, I go where I want… I do anything I want all the time. So, I’m an amazing role model.”

Building a mountain at the expense of the people living below – that’s the concept of Everything Everything’s ‘Mountainhead’ – with the end goal being to reach the top, ‘blocking out the sun’, and becoming the Ultimate. It’s no surprise that the album was written off the back of Jon reading Mark Fisher’s Capitalist Realism, with the relentless drive of capitalism inspiring many songs, as always. But something more specific comes to mind, and something relevant to the time – the rise of male suprematist figures like Andrew Tate in the public cultural sphere.

Scroll through Instagram, TikTok, Facebook or wherever – you can’t avoid it. The motivational speeches, the call for traditionalism, the fear of ‘woke’ and criticism of the modern man and woman. In a post-brexit UK destroyed by the Tories, it’s unsurprising that figures like Andrew Tate have risen to prominence, especially among younger men – the future looks bleak, and the only way to the top is to knock people down on the way.

The image of a ‘hellkite priest’ mentioned twice throughout Mountainhead paints the idea of the kind of figure Tate is in the eyes of these young men – he’s ‘saying what everyone else is too scared to say’. The entire idea of Tate having this ‘secret’ for men to unlock their potential, as long as they follow his word, is to all extents and purposes a cult. And there’s no denying that Tate has the confidence and charisma to carry it off – he’s loud, he’s firm, he likes to think he’s attractive – all the qualities that his young, insecure male followers do not have. The first half of Mountainhead explores this group think mentality.

End of the Contender and the Mad Stone explore the ‘product’ Tate is pushing. The former, inspired by the infamous Ronnie Pickering, explores “strangely targetless aggression and delusions of grandeur that have seeped into the fabric of modern culture.”. Jon himself, talking to NME, said “there’s a whole generation of people, particularly men, who just don’t know what the hell’s going on and a lot of them are quite angry about it.”. These ‘angry



young men’ are ripe pickings for Tate - in a recent YouGov poll, it was found that 35% of 18-29 year old men “agree with ‘the sort of things that Andrew Tate says’. There are an increasing number of ‘mountainheads’ around us, and this is the world that Tate desires. Mad Stone illustrates what happens when one has reached the top of the mountain, finding that it’s just an endless series of men watching men. However homoerotic this sounds (I personally think Tate is closeted and will be much happier and less of a dickhead in his fruity era), he’s reached his goal - a constant and never-ending reflection of followers, with himself always being the most successful. Being from Luton and constantly discussing his modest background, of course to many, Tate looks ‘the double’ of many of his disciples.

‘We will teach you everything’ boasts Tate’s online store, with

the option to pay a bargain $7979 to be part of his 'War Room'. Described as "a global network in which exemplars of individualism work to free the modern man from socially induced incarceration", it was last year exposed by the BBC as little more than a misogynistic hellscape, encouraging men to use violence and intimidation to groom women into sex work. This idea of selling the 'secret to freedom' is echoed in the album's opener, Wild Guess; "This is the most important thing you'll ever buy from us/ Do you know why?". Introducing the Mountainhead cult, it creates the idea of the album being sold as a sort of package deal, similar to Tate's ventures. It also reflects the unresting nature of capitalism, with civillains being told to buy, buy, buy the next secret, the next big thing, the thing that will finally make them 'happy'. R U Happy later counters this, with the dawning realisation that spending will not lead to happiness, instead tapping into the beauty of being a human being – "You are an animal, you are not alone".

"The hallmark of a real man is controlling himself, controlling his emotions, and acting appropriately regardless of how he feels."

Emotion is a huge part of Mountainhead, specifically the repression of male emotional expression. "If you lose control to your emotions, then you're not a very good man" Tate preached on a podcast. This sentiment is reflected in the first half of Mountainhead, particularly with Cold Reactor's chorus - "I sent you the image of a little yellow face / to tell you that I'm sad about the emptiness that's all around me". It's the idea that as men can't express their emotions, they'd rather hide them with a massive mountain or a flux of emojis, the acceptable limit to emotional expression. Don't Ask Me To Beg is the narrator's internal battle to keep his emotions in - "we're not profound, we're just meat" versus "don't go making me emotional". This meat metaphor is reflected throughout the album, with an endless stream of references to bacon, abattoirs and everything in between. It's not only a reference to depersonalisation and hopelessness under capitalism, but it's also a way to hide one's emotions. By reducing yourself to meat, you become something insignificant and incapable of feeling.

Everything Everything have never been afraid to explore mental health – Don't Try and The Mariana immediately come to mind as songs that tackle the traditional, British, masculine stiff upper lip attitude face on. But Enter The Mirror is immediately much more personal. Written about a friend of Jon's who was struggling many years ago, it reads as a heartfelt letter from one man to the other. Sure, it uses humour to deal with fictional loss – "Hope they need a DJ somewhere in the afterlife" – but there's also a pleading aspect that Tate would heavily disagree with – "Look at me now/ It's not over yet"

"The average man doesn't try very hard. So if you try very hard, it's impossible to be average."

The second half of the album ties into the realisation that 'the mountain is a lie', starting with TV Dog – "why is it always liars and ball games when I turn on the television?". The line "I'm doing my best" introduces a run of songs that are much more emotional, tearing apart the mountain metaphor and this idea of needing to be above the average. Dagger's Edge pokes fun at the alpha male stereotype glorified by this subsection of society – "you'll never be a famous dude, I hate to break it to you". In many ways, this song can be seen to speak to the voice behind 'Buddy Come Over', a sort of Elon Musk-esque figure who glorifies "Elvis sitting dead on the toilet" as a timeless god among men. "The need to reconnect with nature, it's a ground up horse and turkey lie" is one of the stand-out lyrics on Dagger's Edge, calling out the failed

attempt of capitalism to achieve a 'return to greatness'. A great deal of right-wing politicians achieve followers by calling for a 'return to traditionalism' – visit any Facebook group titled something like 'remember when' or 'proud to be english' and you'll find middle aged men in their swathes, desperate for a return to the past – a past that didn't actually exist. Men in suits, women in the kitchen, no more iPads and whatever else. There's a reason Tate's call for traditional masculinity is so popular, with Tate himself claiming "they banned me (from several Internet platforms) because I had large swaths of the population agreeing to very traditional masculine values". It's a vision of the world sugarcoated with nostalgia, appealing to younger men who feel overlooked in favour of their female peers. In a world where many men feel so isolated, joining Tate's alpha male cult is the easiest way to feel part of a community, and it's seemingly the quickest route to success.

On the topic of loneliness, City Song the quality of life that can be experienced by cities. Cities are a construction of capitalism, and in many ways an assertion of wealth and masculinity – take skyscrapers like the Trump Tower, for example. The lore of Mountainhead as a whole brings to mind Dolores Hayden's 'Skyscraper rape, skyscraper seduction' (1977), deconstructing urban architecture as a manifestation of masculinity. By building the city higher and higher, life for the people below gets colder and lonelier. "Cast light over me (you are not alone) / This is the city light" tries to find solace in the lights of skyscrapers whilst the rest of the world burns – mirroring the image of Hayden's "upward-thrusting buildings ejaculating light into the night sky". Whilst the powerful, cold architecture of cities may speak to masculine ideals, it's not healthy for anyone – and loneliness can't be cured by the light of a McDonalds sign.

Mountainhead is all about wanting to be THE BEST – building the tallest mountain, building that record-breaking phallic skyscraper, being unstoppable because you're a bloke who did boxing years ago. But it's a thankless chase to put happiness aside in favour of superiority – you can't ignore your emotions forever.

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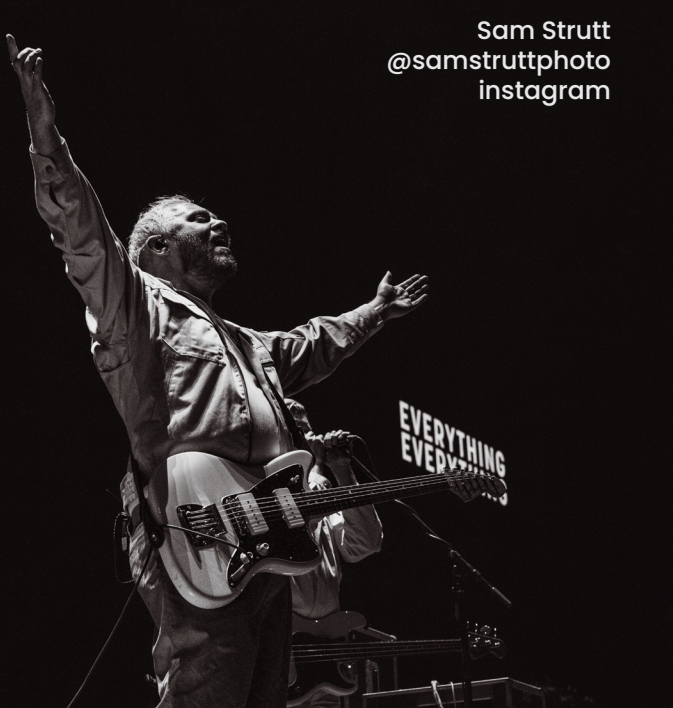
Little Yellow Face
Acrylic on canvas
12 x 12 inch
2024

Evan Scarborough
@evanscarbor instagram
u/evanscarbor reddit

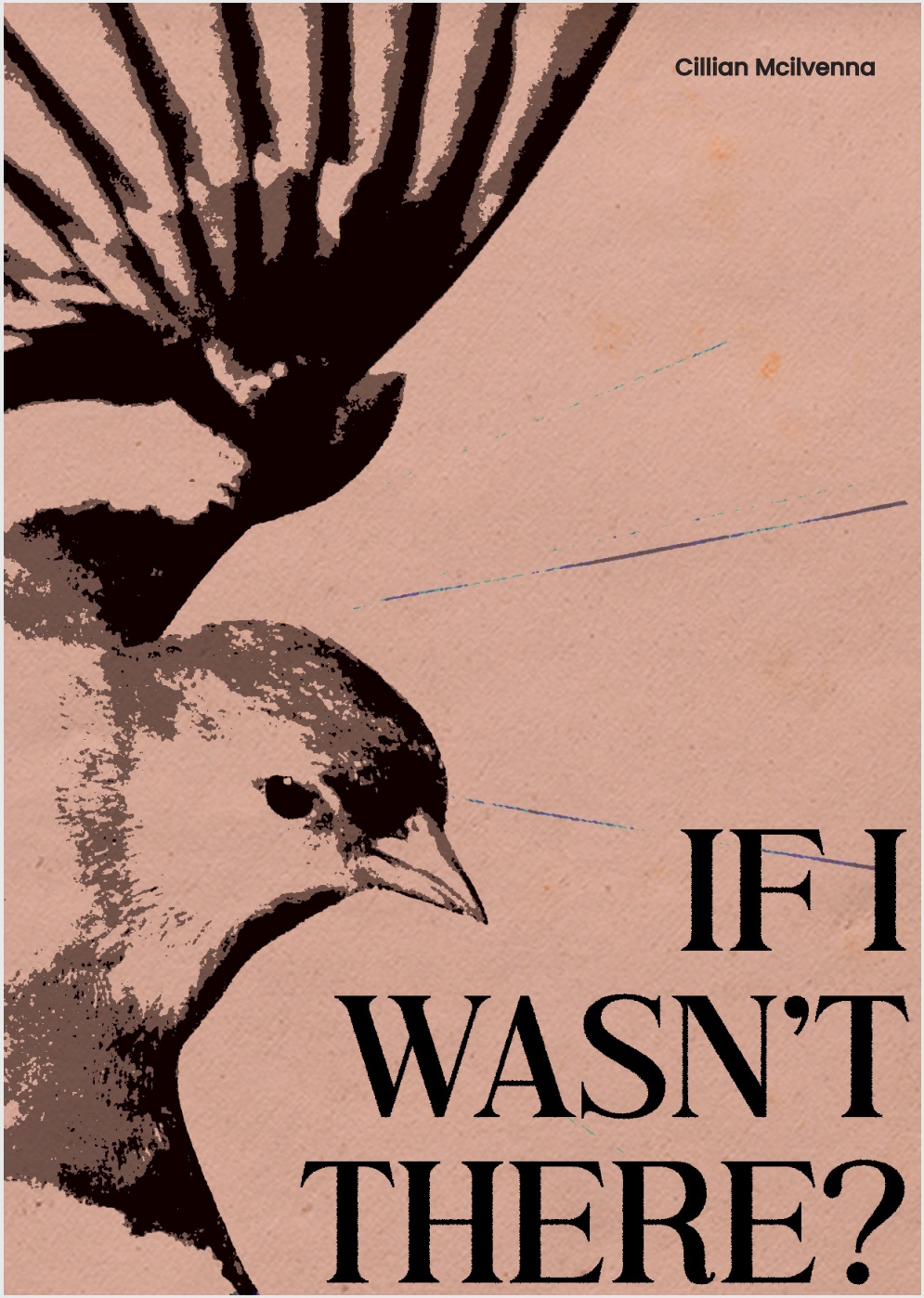


Sam Strutt
@samstruttphoto
instagram

mim
comealivediana.tumblr.com

SkullMaster
discord

HOW COULD I KNOW THAT?


Cillian McIlvenna
IF I WASN'T THERE?

THE DAILY MOUNTAIN

RUN ALL NIGHT, ALL NIGHT, NEVER GET FREE

£25 | TODAY'S UV INDEX: 0.007 | WEATHER: NO

WIN!

AN ALL-EXPENSES TWO HOUR HOLIDAY TO THE PEAKS!

PAGE 832 FOR MORE DETAILS

Scary...big metal worm now a lie

Boffins debunk Creddahornis snaps

By EARTHQUAKE CRAIG

Top Pit scientists were unanimous yesterday in their dismissal of photos claimed to have captured the elusive Creddahornis, the giant "snake" rumoured to live at the very bottom of the Pit.

The photos, which have taken the Pit by storm in recent weeks, appear to show a large pipe- or tube-shaped creature covered in golden fingernails known as "scales". But experts now claim the images are bogus, and are unlikely to prove the existence of the mythic beast, or indeed of any kind of non-human vertebrate life beneath the surface.

"We don't really know how these images were made," chief boffin Raymond Apart said at a press conference yesterday. "Photoshop, airbrush, some kind of AI - take a wild guess. But I looked up the phrase "snake oil" in my dictionary and it means something that's a scam — and *that* is proof, if proof be need be, that these pics are scams also too as well!!!"

Full story — page 47893

Bacon funerals could save Pit millions

By ANNA IVEDONE

New research suggests that having your remains converted into bacon if you die would not only save the Pitish economy millions in food scavenging costs — it would also provide a worthy financial incentive to revive long-mooted plans to open the first Mountainside Toby Carvery.

Full story — page 34168

HOW CAN THEY LAUGH AT IT?

Sneering anti-Mountain rant goes viral

By KEVIN KEVIN-KEVIN

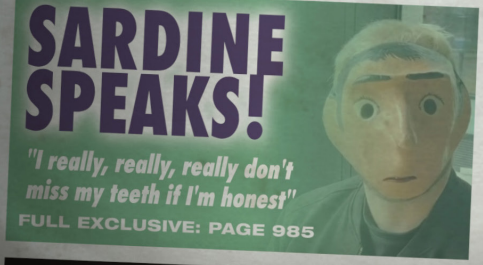
In sickening scenes caught on camera earlier this week, loony protesters once again took to the Outside to continue their vile attempts at promoting anti-Mountainhead ideology.

The footage, which has now racked up thirty thousand views on YouAntelope.co.mtn, shows the do-gooders demanding access to luxurious privileges such as sunlight, love, and daily social interaction. These complaints have been set to "music", a dangerous and subversive form of non-automated art whose main components are believed to consist of "sound" and "silence".

"These disgraceful efforts to undermine Pitish values have no place here," a senior Hellkite Priest commented yesterday. "If the Mountain is to be delivered on schedule and under budget then we must enact a zero-tolerance policy on indulgent stunts like these. Why waste your daily allocated oxygen on just having a big moan?"

The incident comes only days after fresh calls to publicly reveal the true nature of the Summit were once again rejected by the Hellkite Ecumenical Council, on the grounds that such revelations would "not be in the public interest". But rumours of what lies at the very top continue to circulate...

Full story — page 67755992



SARDINE SPEAKS!

"I really, really, really don't miss my teeth if I'm honest"

FULL EXCLUSIVE: PAGE 985

FREE INSIDE

Our pull-out guide to this year's trendiest caves and sumps

PAGE 24601 FOR MORE DETAILS

Mattie Konig
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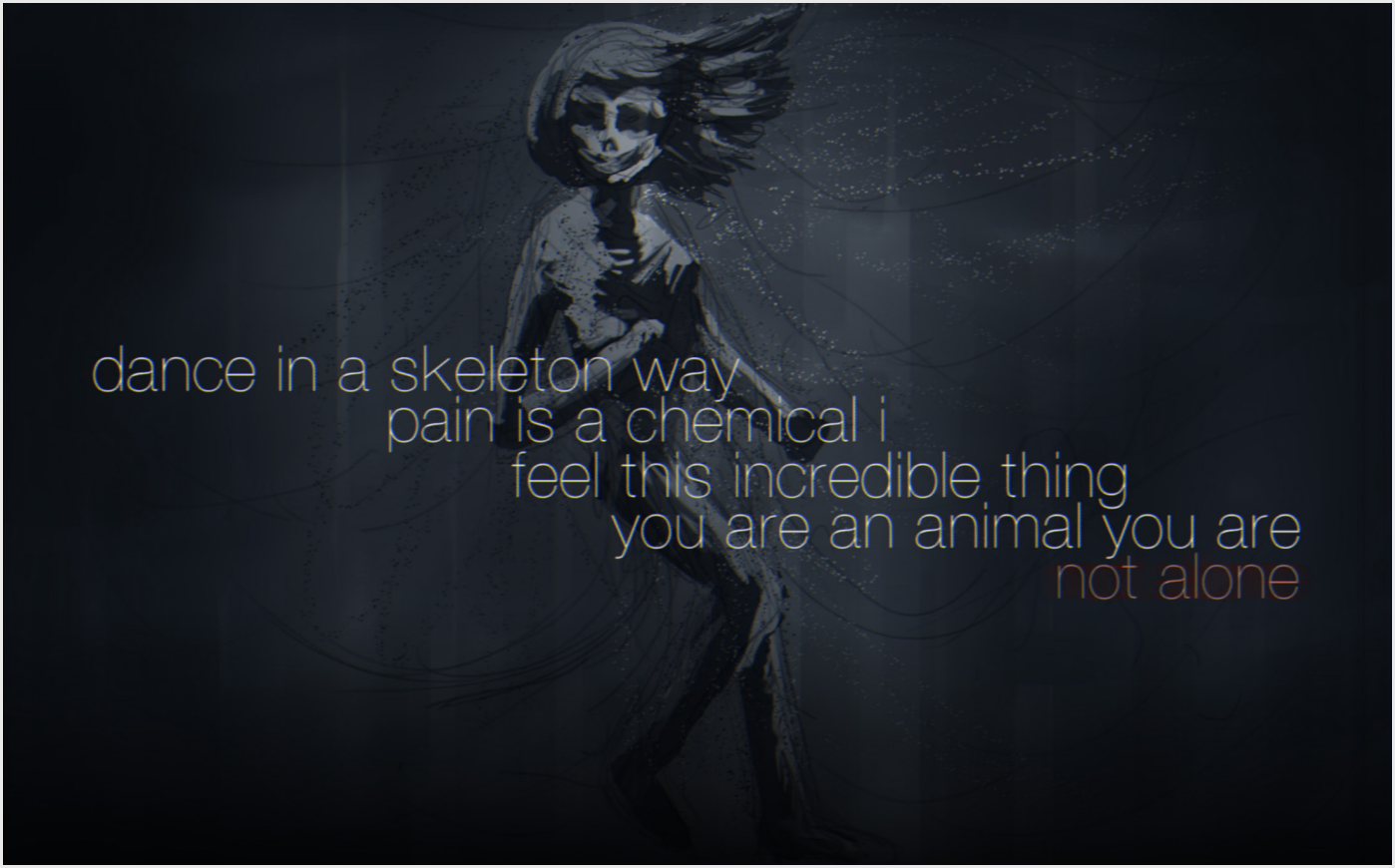
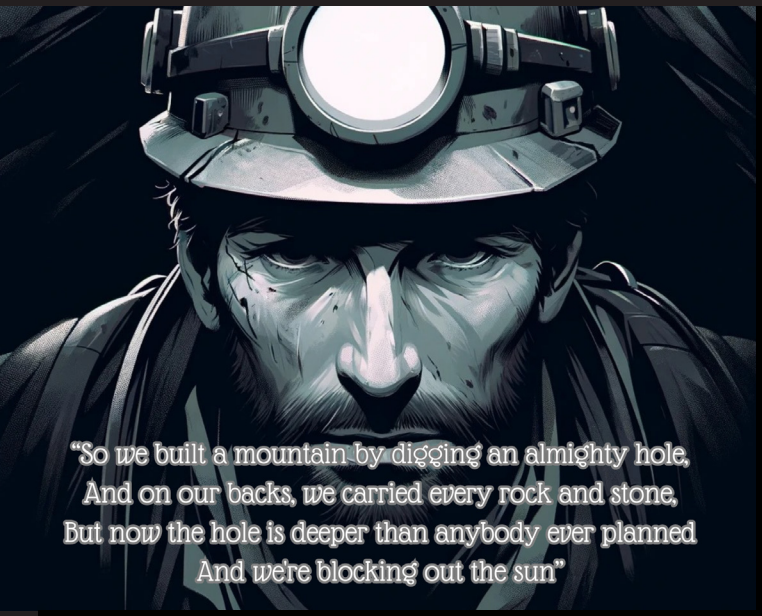
mattiekonig.co.uk

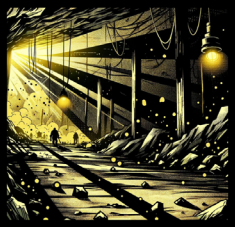


THE PIT
Created by: William A.


“So we built a mountain by digging an almighty hole,
And on our backs, we carried every rock and stone,
But now the hole is deeper than anybody ever planned
And we're blocking out the sun”

We live in The Pit, where we work every day, all the time. It's an amazing job.

Many generations have been building this big mountain, although we have not seen it yet. But I'm sure someday we will.



Some people say that when we do, we will be saved.

From what? Creddahornis? We don't really care; we are very busy with a lot of work. We work and work. Did I tell you how much time we spend working? There are a lot of us working down here, and we are happy to do so. Well, the conditions are not that great, but the hellkite priests always give us talks about how the mountain is happy to have all of us doing our part. Someday we might even become hellkite priests ourselves. I mean, we love The Pit, but it would be great to see the light someday because the “sun” that lights The Pit only lasts for about four hours.

Those who get chosen to be hellkite priests and go with them say it's a big opportunity. I'd like to talk to them, but we never see them come back. Maybe they are busy somewhere learning about the secrets of the mountain. After all, they protect us from thinking too much about useless things, like going to the bottom of the pit, where there is this enormous golden snake that kills everyone who goes there or loses their faith in the mountain.

I have never seen anyone come back from the bottom of the pit, but I'm not scared because I work all day, and you know what they say: “A dug stone a day keeps Creddahornis away.”

So we better keep digging. The mountain watches over us; some say the mountain has a big eye at the top and it's watching everything. And the hellkite priests try their best to keep us safe too.

And the suited people who come with them to take the mountain sacrifices, oh...

Their dedication matches our own; we hold them in high regard! Their tireless efforts alongside ours create a bond of mutual respect and admiration that strengthens our collective resolve.

But lately, a nagging feeling has taken hold of me, a sense that no matter how hard we work, we can never truly satisfy the mountain. It's as if an essential piece of the puzzle is missing, an elusive element that eludes our grasp. Perhaps it's the fear, always lurking in the back of our minds, that someday Creddahornis will emerge from the shadows and come for us. This dread hangs over us like a dark cloud, casting a shadow over our efforts and leaving us questioning the purpose of our toil.

Again, not everything is bad. We have TV and soccer. We religiously watch that ball go everywhere, and oh man, when it gets to the goal, we all cheer.

And the kids, they love when the lightbulbs go off; they even climb those old pillars to see when our sun explodes.

We have everything.. so why would i worry?

I should just trust the process...

Close my eyes, and get some sleep.

Nevertheless...
As long as that exists

I won't be happy..

i have to do something.

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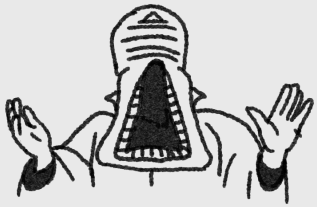
LET THE WIZARD TALK COME



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Strange winds are
blowing on this mortal plane.
The Mad Stone is singing,
can you say the same?
mountainhead.
The chanting of the
rancid Hellkite hoot is
filling up your toad-crossed mind.
@TENTHLANE

Come Now, Decider

By Jack M. Synnott

Everything Everything's lyrical history has been one of invocation. Shapeshifting characters show their faces as early as 'Airstrike on Your Forehead', and *Mountainhead* begins its pilgrimage in the wake of the formicating identities of *Raw Data Feel's* dense near-narrative games. That album credited an AI co-writer, but every Everything Everything project is essentially co-written by fictional characters, benefitting from the shadowy tracks of alter-egos and pseudo-protagonists which buffet Higgs' lyrical voice from peak to trough.

This guideless journey continues on *Mountainhead*, which shows us mirrors of mirrors as Higgs carries on a conversation with half-lit figures from the mythical mountain world. But here, the darkness of the pit productively occludes the landscape of lyrical creations, producing some fascinatingly obscure interactions.

An instructive encounter occurs on 'Don't Ask Me To Beg', one of three songs on the album to feature pronouns in their title (or four, if you count 'Stay With Me'). While the title draws attention to its first-person narrator, the most ambiguous actor is that narrator's interlocutor. This song's referent and context are difficult to parse even by *Mountainhead's* standards, with the listener called upon to continually question just who the song's "you" concerns. We could say that 'Don't Ask Me To Beg' encourages the listener to ask explicitly a question that has seemed implicit in many of Everything Everything's most profound works: who are you?

We can isolate some candidates. The song's listeners are themselves an obvious potential subject, as they will actually hear Higgs' injunction not to ask for begging. Previous background lurkers – from the twice-dead Raymond to the doomsaying Qwerty Finger – can never be ruled out. Within *Mountainhead* itself, cryptic allusions to Hell-Kite priests speak to a powerful organisation that could surely mutilate and bacon-fry. And these spiritual overtures could work to implicate a figure many have found themselves begging before. After all, the chorus of the album's lead single was addressed to Satan. Would it be such a stretch to imagine that this one-sided conversation namechecks (or rather, ostentatiously avoids namechecking) God?

Whoever it is, they've done a number on our narrator, the 'me' whose shoes we briefly find ourselves wearing. The first verse opens with a call-back to one of the darkest moments on *Raw Data Feel*, as we learn that the narrator has been "cut up", a fate Kevin could only dream about. It's no accident that 'Don't Ask Me To Beg', redolent as it is of questions about who is who, comes out of the gate by reminding us of a song that introduced a slew of inscrutable characters (characters, incidentally, described by Higgs as "just the beginning" – though this reviewer can't shake the feeling that the list began with the uneasy register that concluded 'It Was a Monstering').

And elsewhere in the song, their powers are even greater. The song's repeated central line keys us into their impact, as they seemingly succeed in making the narrator emotional. This phrase is dazzlingly evocative, indicating a decisively pragmatic importance to the protagonists' internal state while simultaneously returning the song to a cosmic-mythical register. This less immediate line interpretation is nonetheless unavoidable, as it's a fair criticism of most conceptions of a Higher Power to say that they "made us emotional" - that's what making us implies.

The differing statuses of caller and responder are contained in the precise word choice of the title and hook. The asking "you" is tightly contrasted with the narrator's begging – as if the narrator is at the more extreme end of a spectrum of requests. But this opens up an interesting paradox, as if the asker has to

ask for begging we might think that they themselves have been reduced to begging by proxy. Isn't asking someone to beg on your behalf its own form of begging? What does it say about a beggar, if they can only do their begging through another? And does this ask become more or less beg-like if the asked ends up begging from the asker?

Perhaps critically, can the ask be refused?

Verse 2 insinuates that this might just be possible, as the undetermined "you" is visited by "the darkness" and subjected to a verbal battering with its own baconish implications. It is now the asker who is on the back foot, hopelessly seeking a narrator "wandering" in "a maze of [their] own design". This final line, delivered like a garden-path sentence as part of an imperfectly repetitive couplet, seems to place the narrator in an overall position of authority. The one who designs a maze, after all, knows the way out. But wandering is a curious verb here – does it imply an assured stroll through a foreboding landscape or an uncertain architect trapped by their own creation? This song itself might seem like just such a maze, as Higgs places his narrator figure in a complex, twisting environment, confronting the metaphysical and the mundane, but constructing the very (re) turns that leave him crying out.

These same hinted inversions of constructor and constructed, of leader and follower, of God and acolyte, populated *RE-ANIMATOR's* shifting semi-narrative. The most obvious comparison is 'Black Hyena', that album's pivotal thematic rumination, which imbued the eponymous Re-Animator figure with equal amounts of threatening malice and obliquely promised hope. But that song was able to at least puncture if not resolve an ongoing crisis, following some of the album's darkest songs and facilitating a segue into the more optimistic closing triplet of 'In Birdsong', 'The Actor', and 'Violent Sun'.

Mountainhead's equivalent, on the other hand, takes the pitted darkness of 'TV Dog' and 'Canary' and ambiguously transmutes it, presaging a strange ascendance as we enter a run of songs which seem, to my ears at least, to take place at the top of the mountain. 'Software Greatman's devastating realisation of the inevitability of pain – that no matter how much one tries "to get over this thing", it steadfastly remains – is confirmed in the image of a big climb which brings our narrator lower than ever before. The "thing" that was "always there" at *Raw Data Feel's* conclusion rears its head in the self-constituted maze of 'Don't Ask Me To Beg'. Perhaps there is no way out, even for the designer (whoever they are).

And all this raises a final inversion of the song's deceptively simple title. Questions abound on *Mountainhead* – 'Wild Guess' opens with one of many enquiries, and 'Cold Reactor's address to God laments unanswered pleas. Perhaps the mysterious refrain of 'Don't Ask Me to Beg' invokes begging in an etymologically related but conceptually distinct sense: to make assumptions without prior evidence, as when we 'beg the question'. If understanding this song requires us to cast the roles of asker and beggar, without ever confidently distinguishing between bold theory and solid interpretation, maybe we are the ones being asked to beg. How will we answer?

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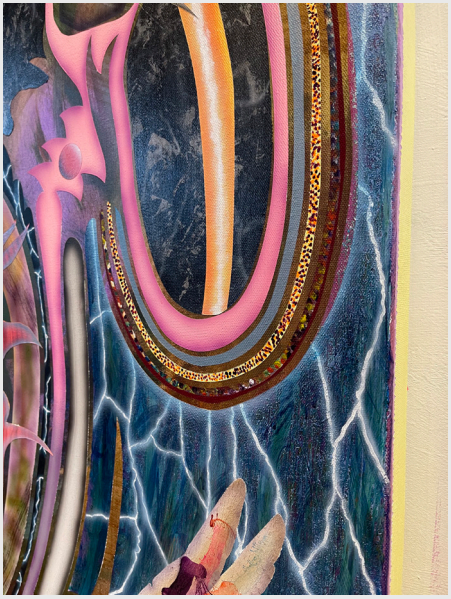
Cell Farming
Acrylic on canvas
122 x 91.5cm
2024



This painting was initially inspired by my favourite Everything Everything song 'Choice Mountain', and what Jonathan Higgs has said about its meaning, referring to the amoebic first stage of all living things and the unbound potential to grow into anything (anything.)

I likened this to how the decisions we make, good or bad, lead us down a particular path, creating a 'branched' timeline, and what that decision might look like if it was to manifest physically, like a whirling portal we could step into.

At the same time, I've been really interested in both the advances in stem cell/gene research and the futuristic possibility of creating unlikely hybrids, and the fact that there are warehouses filled with cellphones to 'farm' engagement on social media via algorithms.

The spiky, curved forms remind me of incisions, exposing layers underneath.

The title is a triple entendre, alluding to my own mental health history and how aforementioned bad decisions could be considered a form of self sabotage/harm.

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Kaznar342
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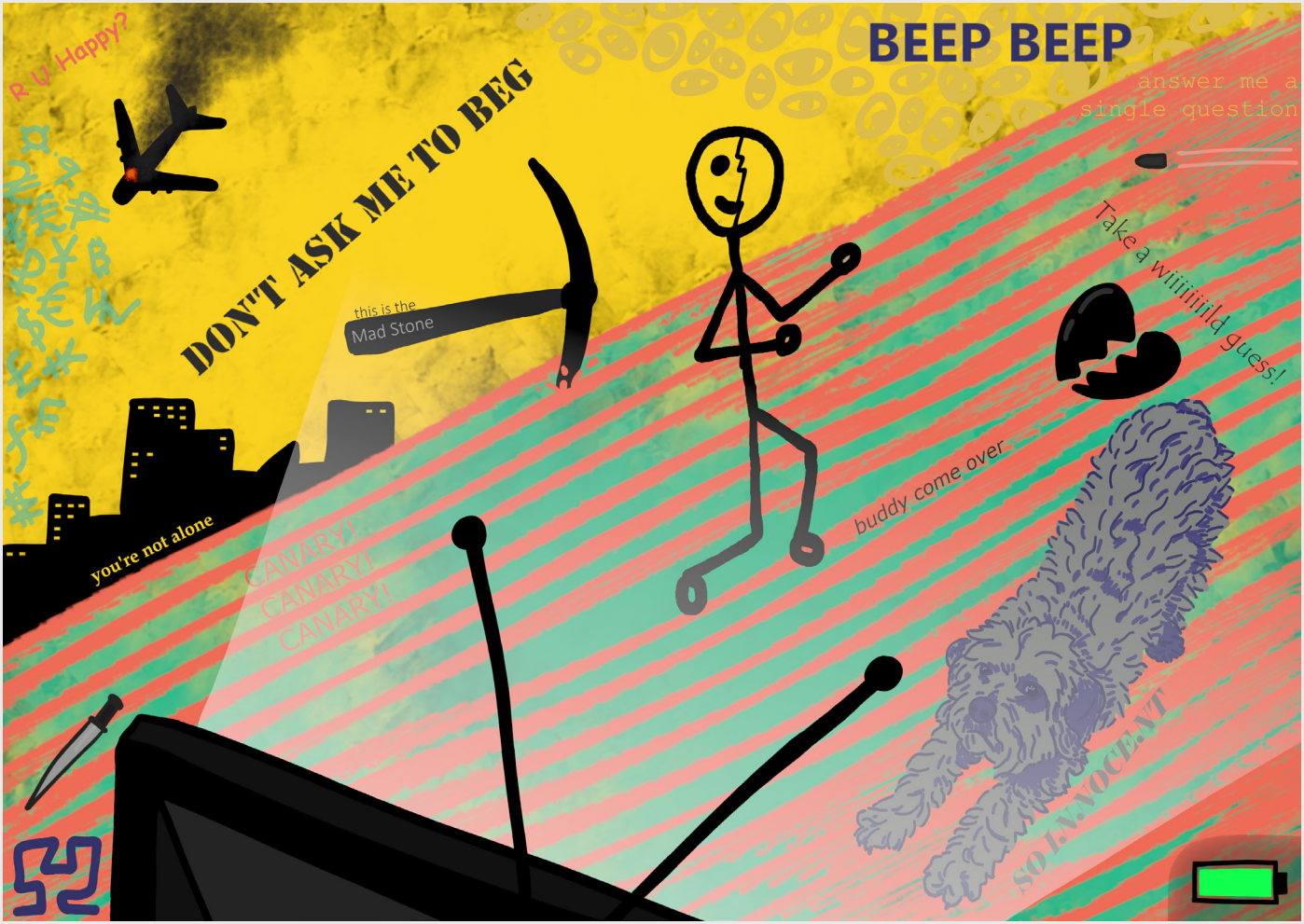

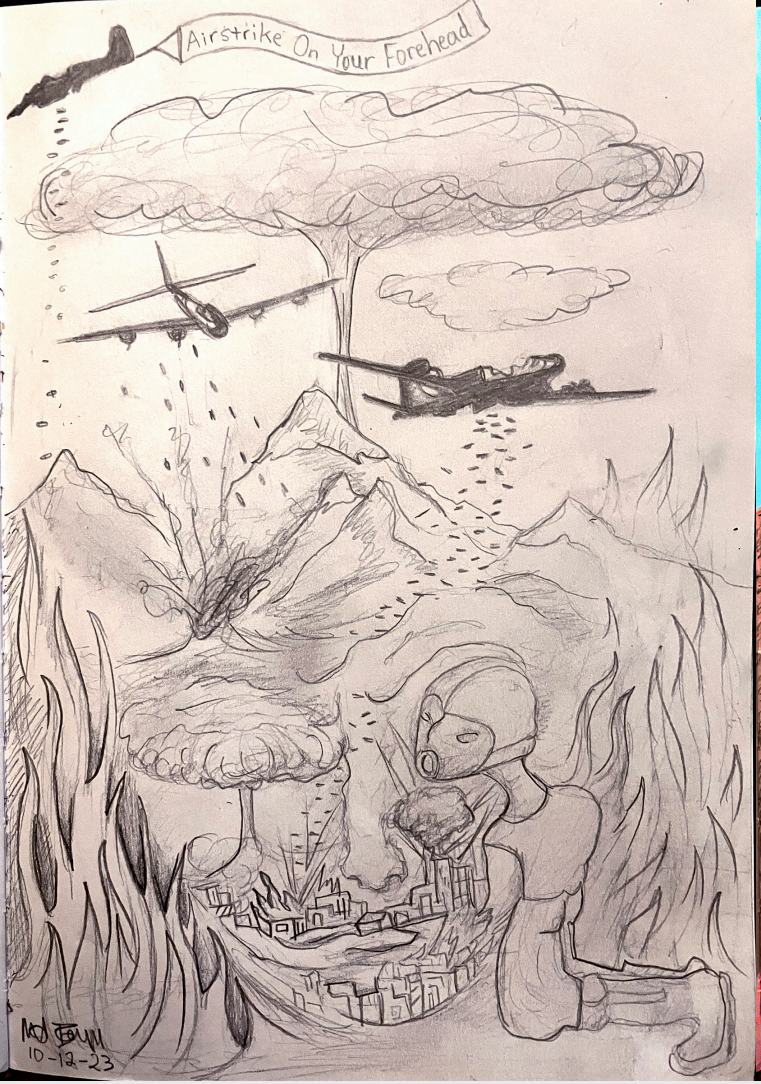

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Thank you to all the lovely Mountainheads who were inspired by Everything Everything and contributed to this publication.

This fanzine was created and designed by Jessica Edge (@super_redhead / superredhead.com) on unceded Dharawal Country (Wollongong, Australia). This is a not-for-profit Local Independent Music People Variety Magazine (@limpzine) project.

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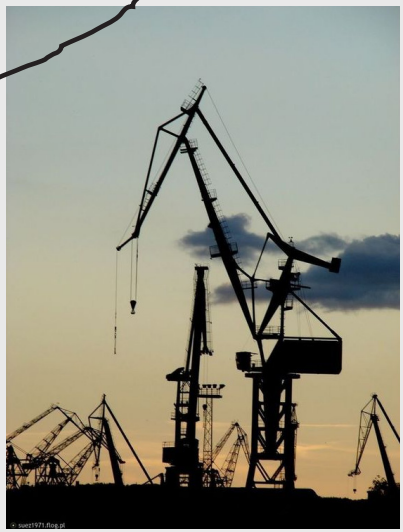
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